

BOOK REVIEWS

The Romance of the Rails. By AGNES C. LAUT. (New York: Robt. M. McBride and Co. 2 vols. 1929. Pp. XV. 307; IX. 312-590. \$7.50.)

Agnes C. Laut, well known as a writer of Western history and historical literature, in these two interesting volumes tells "The story following the four centuries of Exploration in North America of that 'pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night,' which led man in all his wanderings to a realization as far exceeding his dreams as an astronomer's telescope outreaches the feeble grasp of a baby's hand at the stars." This pillar of cloud by day, pillar of fire by night is the locomotive "with its headlight illuminating the way before and its tail light semaphoring the way open to all behind."

These volumes are not a history of railroads but as their title indicates deal with the romance of the rails.

Beginning with early transportation by stage coach the first volume carries the story up to the Civil War: The second continues the narrative to various endings, in some cases, down almost to the present.

The literary style is most befitting romance. Everything moves with the rapidity of the pictures on the movie screen; nobody ever walks, with jumps, or jumps into something. Some of the chapter headings convey no meaning until the chapter is read at least in part, for instance, "Polly puts the Kettle on," "Where did Polly put the Kettle on," "The Milk that Walked," "Boston steps with Dignity," and "Legal Rascality, Loaded Dice."

The Romance of the Sante Fe Trail occupies 29 pages; The Panic of 1873 and The Northern Pacific, and that of the Great Northern are given substantially equal space; but the Hill-Harriman struggle furnishes 39 pages of Romance. Forty excellent full page illustrations set forth the evolution of transportation and its pioneers in Capital fashion. The volumes are well printed, and well bound, and there is an adequate index.

EDWARD MCMAHON

Beyond the Rockies. By LUKIN JOHNSTON. (London and Toronto: J. M. Dent and Sons Limited, 1929. Pp. 212.)

The far reaches of British Columbia are described by this travel diary, in which the author sets down in chatty detail a record of many personal interviews with the settlers of the province.

It is interesting to follow along with Johnston the trail he took on foot and by canoe over 3,000 miles of wild and remote country, little known and exceedingly beautiful. From Mayne Island to the upper waters of the Peace river the author wandered, making friends on every hand. A sympathetic listener, Johnston was able to glean a great deal of information through his conversations with these pioneering people, and it is for the picture of their daily lives brought out in this way that the book is chiefly interesting.

CHLOE S. THOMPSON

American History Told by Contemporaries. Edited by ALBERT BUSHNELL HART, with the collaboration of JOHN GOULD CURTIS. Vol. V. "Twentieth Century United States, 1900-1929." (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1929. Pp. XXI. 917. \$3.75.)

This is the fifth volume in the well known and useful series edited by Professor Hart that has done so much to make American history vivid and interesting. This series is so well known to teachers everywhere that comment on its character is unnecessary. The present volume covers a briefer period than its predecessors and presents problems of selection that the earlier volumes did not because the material of the earlier problems could be seen somewhat in perspective. Perhaps no two individuals would include the same extracts. Judgments differ, and so do points of view. In the present volume there are rarely presented extracts more or less in conflict with each other. Owing to the, as yet, unsettled character of the problems the inclusion of extracts on opposite sides would seem to make for fairness of treatment. However the editors have used their best judgment in making the selections, and the wisdom of Professor Harts' judgment has been demonstrated in the earlier volumes. The reviewer would have found space for LaFollette's side of the campaign of 1912, as a corrective of the Roosevelt side: he would have found a different statement of Wilson's "Too proud to fight," and he would not have included Roosevelt's story of "Warning the German Emperor" in the light of Hill's, Roosevelt and the Carribean. However, these are incidental differences of opinion, and the volume will take its place with the others in the series as the standard source books in American History.